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ABSTRACT

A report is presented of work in syllabus construction and language planning in Finland from the middle of the 1960s to the present. An introductory chapter describes Finland's parallel educational systems, which provide for speakers of the two official languages, Finnish and Swedish, and for instruction in the other national language as well as other foreign languages. The second part of the report deals with factors affecting syllabus construction, with emphasis on how the curriculum should be constructed, who should construct it, for what audience, and the status it should have. The remainder of the report treats recent developments. The history of syllabus development during the past two decades is traced. The major development in the 1960s was the extension of language instruction to the primary grades. The discussion of the 1970s centers on higher education, the upper secondary school syllabus for nongraded teaching, the common core syllabus for comprehensive secondary schools, a course-based upper secondary school syllabus, and revision of the common core syllabus. The last part of the report deals with the need for models of the teaching system and with general policy for the development of language teaching. (AMH)

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155/1980 **New orientations in foreign language syllabus construction and language planning: a case study of Finland**

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NEW ORIENTATIONS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE SYLLABUS CONSTRUCTION AND LANGUAGE PLANNING: A CASE STUDY OF FINLAND

Viimeaikaisia suuntauksia kielten opetussuunnitelmien laadinnan ja kielisuunnittelun alalla Suomessa

Sauli Takala

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FOREWARD

This is an expanded version of a talk presented by the author at the second Nordic language teachers' conference held in Reykjavik, Iceland, August 23-28, 1980. The theme of the conference was "Language society-world".

The author's interest in problems related to foreign language syllabus development and language planning derives from an active participation in several national working parties set up to prepare syllabuses for foreign language teaching in different types of educational institutions. The author has earlier discussed similar questions (Bulletin 129/1979, in Finnish). It was found that syllabus construction and language planning work has been very intensive in Finland during the past fifteen years. Recurrent problems in that work led to the setting up of a national Committee on Language Teaching Policy in Finland. The committee report, submitted to the Ministry of Education on February 5, 1979, forms a basis for all subsequent language syllabus and language planning work in Finland.

Jyväskylä, October 7, 1980

Sauli Takala

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1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Let me start this case study with some factual information concerning the scope of language teaching in Finland. Finland is officially a bilingual country with Finnish and Swedish as the equal national languages. The constitution states that the material and cultural needs of both groups have to be served on an equal basis. In Finland this means, among other things, that we have parallel educational systems for the speakers of both languages from kindergarten to higher and adult education. We have always taken pride in the fact that we have a very liberal language policy.

Since neither Finnish nor Swedish are vehicles of international communication, we are obliged to take language teaching seriously. And since it has always been accepted, more or less but never wholly unanimously, that the national languages should be included among compulsory subjects, the scope of language teaching in Finland is quite large, larger than in most comparable countries. International comparisons are frequently cited by people who would rather like to increase the proportion of the mother tongue, sciences, mathematics etc at the expense of foreign languages. A national commission on language teaching policy, which recently submitted a unanimous report to the Ministry of Education, pointed out, however, that while international comparisons of syllabuses and timetables are useful, language teaching policy must obviously be based on national needs and conditions.

In the new comprehensive school every pupil studies the other national language (Swedish or Finnish) and a foreign language. About 90 % of all Finnish speaking pupils start with English in the third grade (age 9) and almost all Swedish speaking pupils start with Finnish. There is no streaming or setting during the first four years of FL studies. Another compulsory language starts in grade 7. During grades 7 through 9 there are three sets in the first language and two sets in the second language. Pupils choose sets towards the end of the sixth grade but they can change sets if they have chosen either a too easy or too difficult set. The question of sets has dominated public discussion in educational circles in Finland, because the choice of lowest sets ("C-stream") means that the pupil cannot go to the academic upper secondary school. Also some lines in the vocational school are out of reach.

It is also possible to choose a third language as an optional subject in the eighth and ninth grades of the comprehensive school. This option is annually taken by some 30 % of all pupils.

If the pupil goes to the upper secondary school he continues the languages started in the comprehensive school. At present the other national language and two foreign languages are obligatory and a third foreign language is optional. If the recent plans are realized, every pupil will continue the study of foreign languages in the vocational school as well. The amount will vary considerably according to the type and level of line. One of the reasons for this new policy is the fact that the knowledge of languages is becoming an integral part of vocational competence at all levels including crafts and trades. Another reason is the wish to open up the channel from the secondary vocational sector to higher education, and in higher education a good knowledge of languages is a sine qua non.

During the first four years (grades 3-6) study of the chosen foreign language takes 7.8 % of all class time. The number of lessons is typically 2 or 3 a week throughout all seven years of FL study in the comprehensive school. During the upper level (grades 7 - 9) the proportion is considerably higher: 16.5 % of all class time if the pupil studies only the two compulsory languages, and 20.5 % if the pupil also studies the third optional language. In the upper secondary school the proportion varies from 30 % to 45 % depending on whether the pupil studies the optional fourth language or not. According to Cabinet guidelines from November 30, 1978, the subjects of general education common to all pupils in vocational schools would consist of 500 hours during the first so-called broadly based first year, and after that of 830 hours in craft-level and of 1400 hours in technician-level schools. According to preliminary plans the other national language would have 57 hours during the first year and after that 57 - 114 hours in the craft-level schools and 171 hours in technician level schools. While there may be some changes in these figures, they do not alter the basic fact that a major development is taking place, ie. modern language study is now accepted as a integral part of all vocational education. The old dichotomy of academic vs. practical education is weakening. In a country such as Finland the knowledge of foreign languages is increasingly becoming an essential part of occupational competence.

One of the new features of the on-going degree reform in higher education is that foreign language study and a pass in an examination will be required by all faculties, when earlier it was common in some

faculties, but definitely less common in some faculties. All universities have established language centres either separately or as a joint institute. There is also a national Centre for the Finnish Universities at the University of Jyväskylä, which acts as a coordinating clearinghouse.

2. FACTORS AFFECTING SYLLABUS CONSTRUCTION

Curricula and syllabuses are among the most important factors that guide the construction of teaching materials and teaching itself. As the importance of knowing what guides teachers' activities has increased along with a growing awareness of teachers' crucial role in carrying out the educational objectives, there has emerged a special line of study called curriculum research. After more than ten years' work on various aspects of the curriculum the author has come to the conclusion that HOW the curriculum should be constructed depends on a number of factors. This might be illustrated in the following way (Takala 1979, 59):

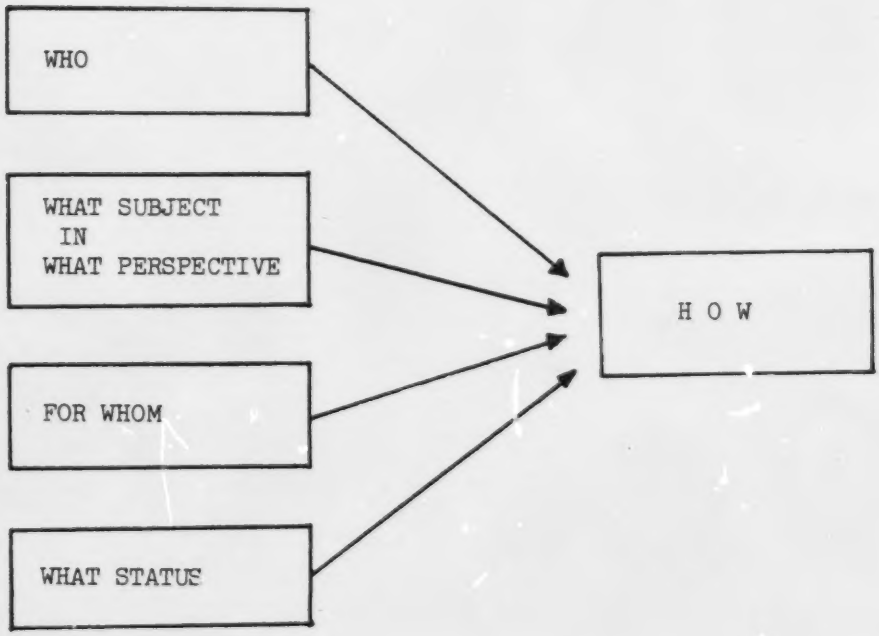


FIGURE 1. Factors affecting the form of the curriculum

Who construct the curriculum? Is it all done centrally so that teachers only work with the curriculum? Or will curriculum construction be a hierarchical process, ie. will there be contributions at all levels from the national level to the individual teacher level? Are the teachers expected to work on the curriculum, interpreting it to suit local circumstances, as well as work with the curriculum? The subject also has a definite impact as such. We do not expect the mathematics syllabus to resemble very closely the foreign language syllabus. But even within the same subject there are a number of possible varieties depending on how the subject, in this case language, is conceived of. What is our perspective, our view of language and of the functions of language? Changes in perspective have brought about changes in syllabuses.

As in all human communication it is very important to take into account the communication partner(s), it is necessary in syllabus construction to remind ourselves of our possible target groups. For whom is the syllabus intended? There are several possible target groups: political decision-makers, general public, employers, writers of teaching materials, teacher educators, examining boards, teachers and pupils. The more the author has thought about this question the more he tends to believe that we need different versions of varying degree of specificity intended for different target groups. We cannot expect to be able to communicate properly with such diverse groups unless we tailor our message to suit each group.

How we should construct the foreign language syllabus also depends on what status it is to have. Will what is written be binding in terms of what should be taught or even what should be learned, or is the curriculum only a guideline, a road map, to help teaching proceed in a desired direction? It makes quite a difference if a detailed curriculum is a binding document or only one possible exemplification of the general objectives of teaching. In the latter case the curriculum would be a kind of yardstick or point of reference for teachers' and textbook writers' work on the curriculum. Thus we can conclude that there is not, and can never be, a definitive curriculum or any one best curriculum for all times and for all circumstances. As there are no universally valid tests, there are no universally valid curricula or syllabuses. Both tests and syllabuses are valid only under specific circumstances and for specific purposes.

3. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SYLLABUS CONSTRUCTION IN FINLAND

3.1. Developments in the 1960's

The first major step in developing language teaching in Finland was the extension of FL teaching to primary schools (cf. Takala & Saari 1979, Saari & Takala 1980) starting from the middle of the 1960's. The main reason was the wish to increase educational equality in terms of curricular offerings. Main organizational and syllabus influences came from Sweden.

Educational equality was the main reason for the introduction of the comprehensive school, which now covers the age group from 7 to 16 (a 9-year school). In fact, the greatest change in terms of syllabus content was that all pupils now study foreign languages, not only one but two. The decision in favour of two compulsory languages was made in face of stout opposition from some of the main architects of the comprehensive reform. Major influences on the FL syllabuses from abroad came from the Council of Europe Ostia and Ankara conference resolutions and from the Swedish comprehensive school curriculum.

3.2. Developments in the early 1970's

3.2.1. Higher education

Increased awareness in the early 1970's of problems in syllabus construction in Finland was, in a large measure, due to extensive R & D work on the teaching of foreign languages to non-language majors at universities and to the expansion of language laboratories at universities. In both sectors the problems of syllabus construction were clearly recognized. This led to the Ministry of Education setting up a working party to work out a system for describing the objectives of language teaching. It is important to emphasize that it was, indeed, a system that was intended, not a specific

definition of objectives for some particular course. This work was carried out by Mr. Roland Freihoff and the author. One of the sources of influence in our work, but probably not the most important, were the early publications of the Council of Europe unit-credit project. The system is an attempt to define communicative tasks in terms of coummunicative purposes set in the context of certain communication situations. It is a taxonomic synthesis, which draws upon a variety of sources: psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, communication theory, pragmalinguistics, stylistics, translation theory and language didactics. The system was so designed that it would be hospitable to a wide range of applications: from macro-level syllabus description to a detailed breakdown of specific communicative tasks in specific situations.

The Freihoff-Takala (1974) system for describing the objectives of language teaching has the following major variables or parameters, each of which is further broken down to several sub-variables:

(1) Topics, ie. the domains, facts etc. that are addressed.

(2) Framework of communication/situational factors: these include the relationship between communication partners, their attitudes towards the topic, physical and temporal parameters, etc.

(3) Stages of the communication process and their basic functions: here a distinction is made between contact-oriented, information-oriented and argumentative communication; stages in communication process are outlined and their characteristic features are described.

(4) Mode of communication: this is mainly related to the way in which the topic is processed and special emphasis is given to the input-output relations. Three main modes are distinguished: repetition, various ways of responding to and processing a received message, and original thought (self-initiation).

(5) Form and channel of message: reception and sending of a message through the visual or auditory channel (listening and reading comprehension, speaking and writing and their interaction, ie. communication proper). This group also includes the potential use of different media (eg. telephone, tape, overhead projector, etc).

(6) Code: this relates to the verbal and non-verbal means of expression and their application rules.

The use of the system is illustrated by a fictional account of a maximally difficult communicative task, which borders on a communicative nightmare. The description is based on the assumption that all aspects are recognized by the parties concerned.

1. Participants

The speaker is in comparison to the hearer (1.1.) in a lower social position in terms of age, level of education, occupation etc. and (1.2.) introvert while the hearer is extrovert. (1.3.) The speaker is presumed or known to be a supporter of some movement (religion, ideology, school of thought) which is less prestigious or influential than the one supported by the hearer. In the situation the speaker (1.4.) is compelled to stress his distance from the hearer and he is (1.5.) negatively disposed to the hearer and vice versa.

2. Topic

The speaker (2.1.) sees the topic from a different - and positive - perspective than does the hearer (negative). The topic is dealt with (2.2.) in a argumentative mode, and the speaker (2.3.) knows the topic less well than the hearer.

3. Time

The speaker is not capable of the same (3.1.) fluency as the hearer and (3.2.) is obliged to rack his memory since he has not read about the matter recently. (3.3.) The information density of his talk is embarassingly small in comparison to that of the hearer.

4. Place

The speaker has no opportunity to use any (4.1.) audiovisual aids or objects but is instead obliged to present everything verbally. The situation is (4.2.) public (eg. TV-discussion), in which the speaker has to move about and use some equipment which only hampers his performance.

5. Noise

The discussion takes place (5.1.) out-of-doors, eg. in a café and next to a major throughfare. The hearer (5.2.) speaks the language of communication fluently but with a very strong accent. The speaker (5.3.) is hungry and at the next table he sees his boss who is enjoying a delicious meal and quite obviously listening to what his employee is saying.

(5.4.) Technical preparations and rehearsal take much time. In the end the speaker is (5.5.) so exhausted and mentally stressed that he can hardly say a word.

3.2.2. Upper secondary school syllabus for non-graded teaching

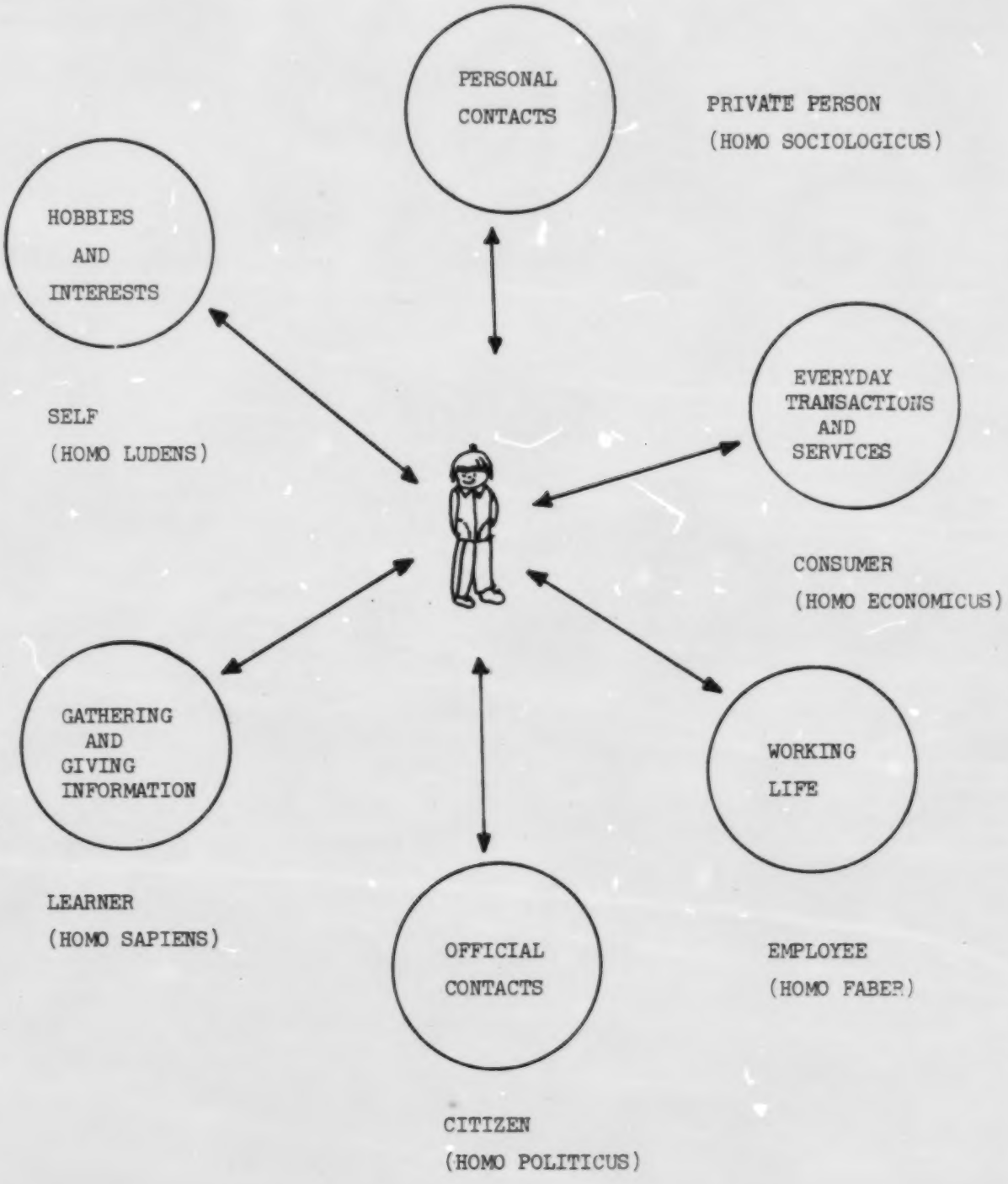
Syllabus work continued at the upper secondary level immediately after the Freihoff-Takala scheme had been completed. In this work (in which the author served as secretary) we could draw on the scheme, the early version of van Ek's threshold syllabus for adults and Valette's work on modern language performance objectives. The final draft syllabus defined the overall aims of language teaching, macro-level objectives for six major cultural areas or role clusters (private person, consumer, employee, citizen, learner, self), which were also described in more detail in micro-level performance objectives.

In the following will be presented a brief summary of the approach to the definition of objectives in the 1975 syllabus draft. In accordance with the Freihoff & Takala system three levels were used: overall objective, macrolevel objectives, microlevel objectives.

Overall objective/aim

The pupil is expected to be able to understand and use the target language orally and in writing, within the linguistic repertoire (s)he has been taught, in such a way that in a communication situation (s)he can initiate, maintain and receive a personal contact as well as receive and give information in a way appropriate to the situation.

The overall objective was broken down into macrolevel objectives/ goals, which were defined for the following six situational or role domains:


PERSONAL CONTACTS
PRIVATE PERSON
(HOMO SOCIOLOGICUS)
HOBBIES AND INTERESTS
SELF
(HOMO LUDENS)
EVERYDAY TRANSACTIONS AND SERVICES
CONSUMER
(HOMO ECONOMICUS)
GATHERING AND GIVING INFORMATION
LEARNER
(HOMO SAPIENS)
WORKING LIFE
EMPLOYEE
(HOMO FABER)
OFFICIAL CONTACTS
CITIZEN
(HOMO POLITICUS)

Personal contacts will be selected to illustrate macrolevel objectives.

Macrolevel objectives/goals

In order to be able to cope with personal language contacts the pupil is expected to be able, within the linguistic repertoire taught,

- to understand the target language (TL) speech so that (s)he can respond to what has been said in a situation-appropriate way
- to speak the TL so that (s)he is able to start and maintain a personal conversation
- to understand and write personal notes and messages

In order to help in defining microlevel objectives we prepared what we called goal-definition forms or "sheets" (see p. 12).

The sheets were used as an aid in defining microlevel objectives.

Microlevel objectives

Typical of personal contacts is the fact that the language in them is informal in register. Contacts take place between eg. family members, friends, acquaintances, colleagues/workmates. Language use situations presuppose mainly oral skills: understanding and speaking of the TL but also reading and writing to a lesser extent. Topics dealt with in personal contacts are almost infinite in number. Language usage is often characterized by a special jargon not readily understood by an outsider. This jargon, however, changes fairly rapidly and cannot really be taught in school. Personal contacts also reflect the customs and attitudes of different cultures. "Family" and "relations" refer here to a family whose vicissitudes are followed during the course and/or possibly to the pupil's host family while staying abroad.

The objective of teaching is that

- the pupil can greet and take leave in various personal contacts and is aware of social differences in different types of greetings and farewells
- the pupil can introduce himself/herself and also introduce his/her family and friends etc.
- the pupil can respond in an appropriate way to being introduced and to somebody being introduced to him/her
- the pupil can take part in conversation dealing with familiar everyday topics

- the pupil can also start a conversation about familiar everyday topics
- the pupil can use typical fillers and feedback phrases in conversation
- the pupil can answer the phone and carry out various transactions over the phone
- the pupil can understand and use orders, exhortations, requests, prohibitions and suggestions
- the pupil can understand a verbal account of everyday events, experiences and feelings
- the pupil can tell about everyday events, experiences in his/her life and about his/her feelings and views on things
- the pupil can understand and write short messages concerning some important piece of information, prohibition, order, etc.
- the pupil can understand and express thanks, felicitations, invitations, apologies both orally and in written form
- the pupil can keep contact with friends through postcards and letters

SPECIFATION FORM FOR FL TEACHING OBJECTIVES

PERSONAL CONTACTS

SITUATIONS (Activity)

Contacts within family and relatives

Contacts between friends and acquaintances

Contacts between workmates

TOPICS (Contents)

home
family
relatives
acquaintances
friends
school
things at works
daily chores
interests
sparetime pursuits

LINGUISTIC EXPONENTS (Products)

Oral:	Act.	Pass.	Not relevant
Greetings			
Introductions			
Leavetaking			
Fillers/feedback			
Chatting			
Conversation (also over the phone)			
Orders, requests, suggestions			
Telling & describing			
Written:			
Messages			
- letters			
- postcards			
- notes			

3.3. Developments in the mid-1970's: Common core syllabus

The question of educational equality returned with a new vigour after the comprehensive school system had started to take over. At this time it focussed on the system of setting in foreign languages and mathematics. The reason was that the choice of the lowest sets was accompanied with administrative limitations for eligibility for post-comprehensive school studies. There were several committees which recommended the definition of such basic objectives and basic subject-matter that would open the doors to all post-comprehensive education. Working parties were set up in late 1975 to prepare such proposals. In this work we could draw on our own previous work, the Schools Council modern languages project, the Threshold project, the Swedish MUT project etc. The Cabinet has recently issued a policy statement according to which the definition of basic objectives will be undertaken with a view to opening up all channels of secondary level education to all pupils who are found to have achieved the basic objectives. In the following will be given relatively detailed extracts from the "Proposal for Common Core Syllabus in English and Swedish" submitted by the working party to the National Board of General Education. A considerable number of pages are devoted to the syllabus produced by the working party partly be cause it represented a new, relatively systematic approach to syllabus planning and partly because the syllabus has exerted a lot of influence in Finland. The author served as the secretary of the working party.

3.3.1. Principles in the construction of the common core syllabuse

The working party discussed the general principles guiding its work as follows (pp. 7-10):

In order for the curriculum to give a correct picture of the nature and functions of language, attention has to be paid to linguistic aspects in the construction of the curriculum for foreign languages. Equally important are pedagogical and psychological aspects, which guarantee that attention is paid to the pupils' language skill needs and the factors influencing language learning.

In order for the language curriculum to provide a clear basis for teaching, construction of teaching materials, evaluation of achievements etc, it should be constructed so that it defines

- the different manifestation forms of the language skill, i.e. what kind of linguistic behaviors (speaking, listening, reading and writing) the pupils should be able to carry out and what is their relative weighting
- situations of language use: what kind of situations should the pupil be able to cope with by use of verbal and non-verbal means (such as facial expressions, gestures etc.)
- what kind of topics and notions the pupil should be able to understand and to express
- communication tasks: What kind of communicative tasks (or functions) should the pupil be able to perform?
- vocabulary repertoire: How many and what kind of words and expressions should the pupil understand and be able to use?
- grammatical repertoire: What morphological and syntactical features should the pupil understand and be able to use?
- level of achievement: what level of linguistic realization should the pupil show in general and in each situation?

Language curricula can be constructed from different points of view. The three following curriculum types differ in their approach and may be called grammatical, situational and notional.

Grammatical curriculum

Grammar	Examples
parts of speech	hospital/-s
- noun	block
- adverb	far
- prep.	to
- verbal forms	to be
- present	can
- imperative	go
syntax	turn
- declarative sentence	It is ...
- direct question	Is it ...?
- indirect question	..., where the ... is
interrogatives	Where? How far?

The grammatical curriculum emphasizes the structural nature of language.

Situational curriculum

SITUATION	LINGUISTIC FUNCTIONS AND THE RELATED CONCEPTS/TOPICS	LINGUISTIC FORM OF REALIZATION	
a person is lost in a strange town and needs help	addressing a person	Excuse me, but ...	
	asking and answering, with regard to	Can you tell me ...	
	- place		
	- direction		
	- distance	Where is ...?	Turn right
		How far is it to?	It's five blocks
	thanking and responding to it	Thank you	Not at all

The situational curriculum emphasizes the linkage between the language and the situation: when and in what situation does the pupil need the language he is studying.

Functional-notional curriculum

COMMUNICATIVE NEED	SITUATION	LINGUISTIC FORM OF REALIZATION
expressing the time	answering a question about the time of the day	It's five (o'clock).
	answering a question about the train's departure	It'll depart at five (o'clock).
	answering a question about opening hours	It's open from nine to six.
making a suggestion	x suggests to y that they go for a walk	Let's go for a walk. Shall we go for a walk?
	host-guest	How about a cup of coffee? Would you like to have a cup of coffee?

The functional-notional curriculum emphasizes pupils' communication needs: what should the pupil understand and be able to express in the language he studies.

In the teaching of a foreign language, language can be conceived of primarily as activity. It is an instrument, which has many kind of tasks (functions) in the life of both an individual and society. These tasks include e.g. the expression of one's own experiences, the dissemination of information and the creation, maintenance, and controlling of social relationships. Language, despite its instrumental nature, always contains a message too, and in order to attain the overal educational aims of the school it is important that in instruction attention is paid to the contents of messages.

Language is activity which helps the pupils to cope with various situations occuring in his environment both orally and in writing. Thus the situational aspect of language is very important when the basic objectives and basic teaching contents of foreign language teaching are being defined.

The above curriculum models do not, however, exclude but complement each other. Thus for example the notional aspect can be given increasing attention when basic structural aspects have been learned. Structures and words as well as expressions are largely determined by the communicative needs (the need to understand and express oneself) and by the central language use situations.

For this reason the usefulness ("surrender value") of each grammatical structure, word, and expression should be weighed carefully on the basis of its communicative value and meaningfulness in the commonly occurring language use situations. The pupil's linguistic products should also be evaluated primarily on the basis of how well the communicative need (intention) is satisfied (=criterion of successfulnes) and how suitable they are in each situation (=felicity criterion).

3.3.2. Relative emphasis of language skills

The working party was of the opinion that the sub-areas of language skill are to emphasized in teaching according to what use value the different sub-areas have in situations demanding language skills. The comprehensive school curriculum emphasises the importance of speaking and listening comprehension. Several recent studies on the need for foreign language skills have shown the importance of the ability of reading comprehension. Later on in life pupils very often find themselves is a communication situation where understanding of a foreign language plays an important part. Since we generally have to understand language which is more difficult than what we are able to produce ourselves, sufficient emphasis in teaching has to be put on listening and reading comprehension, however, without neglecting the need to develop pupils' ability to speak the language. In real language use situations the different sub-areas of language skill often appear together. Thus e.g. in conversation the pupil has to understand and himself be able to speak the foreign language. This close connection should also be reflected in teaching.

A reading situation is different from a speaking situation. Written text is generally more compact than spoken language. In speech there is often a lot of redundancy but on the other hand some parts of the message are often omitted if they are understood anyway on the basis of the situation and what has been said before. The reader can proceed at his own speed, make use of e.g. dictionaries or even ask somebody about a strange word, whereas in conversation the listener cannot as easily influence the speakers' tempo, the dialectal quality, clarity, topic, difficulty level etc. of the speech. His own contribution in this two-way communication situation he can choose from the linguistic repertoire he masters. In some listening situations, such as radio or television broadcasts, the listener cannot influence the speaker at all nor ask clarifying questions. (pp. 11-12).

3.3.3. Consideration of the overall educational objectives in the teaching of foreign languages

The teaching of foreign languages can, when carried out in the right way, in many ways promote the realization of the school's general educational objectives. The learning of a new language in addition to the mother tongue increases the individual's possibilities for international contacts and promotes his functional competence even in his own country.

Through appropriate choice of topics language study can increase the pupil's knowledge about other nations, and widen his views, so that he recognizes and appreciates the special features of his own culture and of other cultures. Thus language study increases tolerance and understanding between nations.

Likewise the treatment of different aspects of society and different fields of working life can increase the pupil's understanding of and respect for the work carried out by different members of society.

The aims of social and ethical education can be supported by language teaching by inculcating in the pupils willingness to co-operate and help each other, to accept and appreciate differences between pupils and between achievements, as well as to take responsibility for one's own and others' work. This calls for a positive working climate and favouring of student-centred working methods.

Creativity can be supported in language teaching by developing pupils' spontaneous expression ability in connection with both oral and written production.

Appropriate choice of working methods can promote e.g. learning of study techniques; memorizing, organizing and recalling of information; learning of concepts; ability to make deductions; assessment of information, and problem solving, which all are included in the aims of cognitive education of the comprehensive school.

From the viewpoint of positive development of the pupil's total personality it is important that language study should help to alleviate anxiety and restlessness.

A positive and relaxed study climate and positive learning experiences gained during the studies may have a considerable influence on this. The choice and treatment of topics and language use situations may also be of considerable importance from the viewpoint of supporting the general educational aims (pp. 15-16).

3.3.4. Basic objectives for English

The working party made an attempt to specify the general aims of language teaching on the basis of research-based information on language, language teaching and language learning, so that the basic aims would define the pupil's terminal behaviour so clearly that persons making decisions regarding teaching can plan and realize teaching in a sufficiently uniform manner. The following is a verbatim extract from the report of the working party (pp. 17-44).

Grades 3-4

Oral communication (to understand and speak)

The aim is that the pupil within the limits of the basic teaching contents is able

- to recognize sounds, stress and intonation
- to repeat expressions (also songs and rhymes etc.) in accordance with a spoken model

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- to understand simple questions, answers, statements, commands, requests and prohibitions
- to make himself understood when answering simple questions and statements, to react appropriately to commands, requests and prohibitions and to himself make simple statements, questions, requests, commands, and prohibitions
- to understand simple conversations
- to describe persons and objects as well as simple situations and events
- to understand short and simple "texts" delivered at nearly normal tempo and based totally on familiar linguistic material
- to tell about oneself, one's immediate environment, and everyday life.

The speech that the pupil hears is at first delivered at nearly normal tempo, and later at normal tempo.

From the very beginning good and natural pronunciation, speech rhythm, and intonation is aimed at.

Reading

The aim is that within the limits of the basic teaching contents the pupil is able
- to understand questions, answers and short statements
- to understand the contents of short texts based entirely on familiar linguistic material.

Writing

The aim is that within the limits of the basic teaching contents the pupils is able
- to write correctly familiar words, phrases, and sentences first according to a model and later without a model
- to write a short answer to questions presented in writing or orally

At this stage writing is essentially a form of exercise, which is used primarily to support oral practice.

Oral communication (to understand and speak)

The aim is that within the limits of the basic teaching contents the pupil is able

- to recognize sounds, stress, and intonation
- to understand statements, questions, answers, commands, requests, and prohibitions presented at normal tempo
- to understand simple conversations
- to understand short, coherent "spoken texts" which in addition to familiar linguistic material may contain some new linguistic material which can easily be understood on the basis of the situation and the context.
- to repeat fluently what he hears
- to respond to statements and questions to react appropriately to commands, requests, and prohibitions, and to himself make simple questions, statements, commands, requests, and prohibitions.
- to take part in simple conversation based on familiar linguistic material
- to describe persons, matters, objects, situations, and events
- to tell about oneself (e.g. home, family, friends, school, hobbies, likes and dislikes)

The aim in teaching is that the pupil is able to make himself understood in speaking, displaying good pronunciation, stress, speech rhythm and intonation. Pupils are expected to understand more difficult and complex language than they are able to produce themselves.

Reading

The aim is that within the limits of the basic teaching contents the pupil is able

- to read and understand the contents of short texts which are based on familiar linguistic material and which have not been dealt with beforehand
- to read and understand the main contents of fairly short texts which in addition to familiar linguistic material may contain some new linguistic

material which can easily be understood on the basis of the situation and the context.

Gradually the pupils start to practise extensive reading.

Writing

The aim is that within the limits of the basic teaching contents the pupil is able

- to write short replies to questions and inquiries put forward orally/ in writing
- to write short messages first according to a model or instructions, and later on independently.

Writing is used primarily to support oral practice. In addition to this the pupils start to practise guided writing.

Grades 7-9

Oral communication (to understand and speak)

The aim is that within the limits of the basic teaching contents the pupil is at the end of the comprehensive school able

- to understand statements, questions, inquiries, answers, directions, commands, requests prohibitions, and suggestions put forward at normal tempo
- to understand conversation delivered at normal tempo which deals with ordinary, everyday matters
- to understand e.g. reports and descriptions of circumstances and events which in addition to familiar linguistic material may contain some (sometimes for practice fairly much) unfamiliar linguistic material
- to reply to statements, questions, and inquiries, to react appropriately to commands, requests, suggestions and prohibitions, and himself to make statements, questions, inquiries, directions, commands, requests, suggestions, and prohibitions.
- to take part in conversation regarding everyday matters
- to describe persons, objects, situations, and events, as well as personal impressions
- to tell about events and situations that he has seen in pictures, or read or heard, as well as talk about personal observations, experiences, opinions and feelings.

In listening comprehension the aim is that the pupil can understand speec delivered at normal tempo which may also contain some pronunciation features differing from the so-called RP English (American English, slight regional accent, a person whose mother tongue is not English).

The aim in teaching is that the pupil can make himself understood in speaking, displaying good pronunciation, stress, speech rhythm and intonation The pupils are expected to understand more complex and difficult language than they are able to produce themselves.

Reading

The aim is that within the limits of the basic teaching contents the pupil is at the end of the comprehensive school able
- to read and precisely understand the contents of messages regarding directions, appointments, errands to be carried out etc.
- to read without dictionary and understand the gist of a new text which contains mostly familiar and only little new linguistic material
- to read (with the help of dictionary etc.) and understand the gist of a new text which may contain some (sometimes for practice even fairly much) new linguistic material

Writing

The aim is that within the limits of the basic teaching contents the pupil is at the end of the comprehensive school able
- to write an answer to questions and inquiries put forward orally/in writing
- to write a personal message or pass on a received message e.g. in the form of a short note or letter
- to write a short report on a situation or event that he has experienced, seen, heard or read about making use of a dictionary and other reference materials.

Writing is still to a great deal practice, which is used to support oral language use. In addition writing is practised in situations where the message is normally delivered in writing.

3.3.5. Basic teaching contents

The starting point for the definition of the basic teaching contents is partly the same as for the extant comprehensive school curriculum, but partly different. The comprehensive school curriculum emphasizes structures whereas the starting point in the choice of the basic teaching contents has been linguistic situations and the communication tasks of the language. Therefore it was found worth attempting to map not only basic structures but also basic vocabulary.

The proposal for the basic teaching contents includes the following components: language use situations, topics, vocabulary and structures.

A. Language use situations

Since language has been understood mainly as an instrument of communication, the curriculum should express what the pupil is expected to be able to do in various language use situations. Language use situation is used in a wide sense to refer to the external setting of verbal communication, the central roles of persons taking part in it, and communicative tasks (functions). The primary aim of foreign language teaching in the comprehensive school is to make it possible for pupils to cope with situations involving the oral and written use of the foreign language and pertaining to personal contacts, various "transactions" in everyday life, and acquisition and transmission of information. Many language use situations have common elements (e.g. greeting, asking, stating, leave-taking).

(1) Inquiring and giving directions, acting as an interpreter

- asking and giving information about a place, address, transportation, etc.
- asking and telling the time, time of departure, etc.
- asking and telling a reason, how to do something or how to behave in order to...

(2) Meeting and visiting

- greeting and leave-taking, and responding to them
- introducing oneself, introducing others, and responding to introductions

- asking, thanking and apologizing, as well as replying to them
- asking and telling about "what's new", chatting, small-talk, expressing polite interest in social interaction
- congratulating and expressing regret and sympathy, as well as responding to them
- inviting, accepting and declining an invitation
- making an appointment

(3) Transactions in everyday life (mainly as a client and consumer of services)

Situations connected with travelling

- inquiries and instructions/directions (cf. point 5.5.1.1.)
- getting tickets and "checking in"
- getting a taxi, giving an address
- understanding announcements, signs, notices etc.

Situations connected with accomodation and meals

- booking and "checking in" (hotel, youth hostel, camping site etc.)
- ordering a meal (cafeteria, restaurant)
- passing and asking others to pass things at table
- paying a bill, asking for clarification

Situations connected with shops and offices

- post and bank (getting stamps, exchanging money, getting change etc.)
- buying things (expressing wishes as to article, size, colour, material, price range etc.)

Other services

- tourist information centre, information centre
- police
- ticket offices
- service stations
- doctor, dentist and chemist's

Using the telephone

(4) Situations connected with the acquiring and giving of information

1. Telling about oneself (name, age, home, school, everyday chores, leisure-time, interests, spending holidays, plans for the future etc.) and asking similar questions orally and in writing.

2. Telling about one's local community and one's country (population, industries, notable places and persons, points of history etc.) and asking about similar things orally or in writing

3. Reading a linguistically simple text

4. Reading and writing a letter

5. Getting acquainted with material dealing with the "culture" (in the broadest possible sense) of the linguistic area(s) in question

The working party also attempted to determine what kind of language pupils could be expected to be able to produce in various central language use situations. Below is given an extract from two language use situation types (pp. 45-46).

1. Inquiring and giving directions, acting as an interpreter

1.1. Asking and giving information about a place, address, transportation etc.

Excuse me, where is the nearest post office, please?
When does the next train leave to/for York?
How can I get to the Tower (of London), please?

Is this the right bus for Tapiola (please)?
Is this the right platform for the Bakerloo line?
I want to go to the British Museum. Which is the nearest tube station, please?
Do I have to change?
How far is it to Marble Arch?
How long does it take to get/go to Greenwich by bus?

Do you know how to ...?
How doest it work?
What must I do?

Go straight ahead...
Turn left/right
three blocks
Take a number 87 bus.
Take the Central (line) to ...

Ten minutes' walk
400 yeards/metres
You'll see it on your left(right).
You'd better take a taxi.
... and ask again.

I'll draw you a map.

Press the(that) button.
Put in a 10p coin and pull the handle.
Turn the handle.
Lift...

Have you got the right time?
What time is it?
What time do you close/open?
How long... last/take?

2. Meeting and visiting (an acquintance/friend and a stranger)

2.1. Greeting and leave taking

Good morning
Good afternoon
Good evening
Hello
How are you?
I'm fine thank you and you?

Good night
Good bye
Bye-bye
(I'll) see you tomorrow.
It is (was) a pleasure (nice) to see/meet (seeing/meeting) you.
Please remember me to your sister/brother.
Give him (her) my regards.
Give my love to ...
Best of luck...

2.2. Introducing oneself, introducing others, and responding to introductions

My name is ... / I am ... from ...
This is my friend/sister/Matti...
I'd like you to meet...
Do you know my friend...?
How do you do?
Pleased to meet you.
Nice to meet you.

2.3. Thanking and apologizing

Thank you (very much).
Thanks.
It's very kind/nice of you (to)...
Thank you for a lovely party/evening. I enjoyed...
very much

Not at all/You're welcome.
Excuse me (for...ing)
I'm sorry. I'm very sorry. Sorry.
Pardon?
It doesn't matter. That's all right.

2.4. Asking ant telling about 'what's new', conversing, chatting, small-talk

How are you today?
How is your family/sister/mother...?
What's new?
How's life?
How are things at home (with Bill, at work)?
How was your trip?
Did you have a nice summer holiday?
How was the weather in your country in the summer?
How was the exam?
Did you get a ticket to (for) ...?
Did you get the job?

Please remember me to your sister(brother)...
Give him/her my regards.
Give me love to...

2.5. Expressing agreement, making comments and remarks in conversation

positive response	neutral response
(Yes), that's right.	Maybe.
That's true.	
I agree	Perhaps.
	Are you sure?
Yes, of course.	I'm not (so) sure.
Certainly	
I think so too.	That's possible.
Neither do I.	
All right. OK.	You could be right.
Good!	
That's fine!	
That's a good idea.	
That's wonderful!	
This is very nice/good.	

expressing opinion

I think
Fortunately...
I'm afraid...
What a pity!
I hope so.
To tell the truth...
I'm sorry to say that...

negative response

Oh, no.
I don't think so.
That's not true.
That's impossible.
Certainly not.
I don't agree.
Do you really think so?
It's not very nice.
I don't think that's a good idea.
I don't like this/it.
I'm sorry but I can't do it.

phrases expressing polite interest

Really?
I see.
Oh, dear.
Do you mean that?
What happened next/then/after that?
Go on.
Pardon?
Sorry?
Why was that?
Well ...
That's interesting.
What did he/she say?
Why do you think so?
What about...?
Oh yes.

calling attention, changing the subject

By the way,
Excuse me,
Did you know that...
What about...?
Tell me...
Oh, before I forget, have you...
Right,

hesitation, fillers

Err...
Well,
I mean...
Now,
..., you know.
Well, I don't know.
Anyway,
... you see.

2.6. Congratulating and expressing regret/sympathy

Happy birthday!
Many happy returns!
Congratulations!
Well done.
That is good news.
I'm very happy for you.
Merry Christmas!

What a nice...!
I like your (new)...

I'm (so) sorry that.../ I'm (so) glad that...
I was very sorry to hear that/about...
I was very glad to hear that...
What a pity she can't come.
That's a pity!

Never mind.
It doesn't matter.

Hard luck.

2.7. Making, accepting and declining an invitation

Will you come (to the cinema with me)...?
Would you like to come to a party with me...?
How about coming to the cinema with me...?
Let's go for a walk. (shall we?)

I hope you can come too.

Thank you.
With pleasure.
That would be very nice. Thank you.
I'd love to. Thank you very much.
That's a good idea.
What a good idea.

No thank you.
I'm afraid I can't... Thank you for asking/all the same.
No thanks, I have some work to do.
No thanks, I have to see someone.

B. Topics

The topics consist of matters and contents dealt with in language teaching. Topics and language use situations are connected with each other. Thus certain topics are often dealt with in certain situations and respectively a certain kind of situation may be arranged for the treatment of a certain topic. Topics can be dealt with orally or in writing according to their nature.

In order to attain a real communication skill and a language skill of practical use in general, the linguistic material taught has to be connected with different fields of life, and if possible language practice has to be fitted into everyday situations. The aim of the following list of topics is not to draw a strict line between topics to be dealt with and those to be left out in foreign language teaching in the comprehensive school. Most topics are suitable for treatment at different stages of language study; pupils' age, their interest, and the coordination of language study with the study of other subjects are taken into consideration in the treatment of the topics. The treatment of the topics should widen and deepen the knowledge of the area(s) where the language is spoken, and illustrate the use of the language also outside those areas. The topics should also deal with the pupil's own country to such an extent that the pupil can act correctly in the language use situations mentioned in points A4.1. and A4.2. above.

(1) Man

Man and his body
Health, illness, hygiene
Movement, and activities
Sensory perceptions, feelings and attitudes and thoughts
Verbal interaction

(2) Everyday life

Home life and home chores
Food, meals, etc.
Clothes and accessories
Shopping and services
Traffic, transportation and travelling

(3) Society/community and social life

Family, relatives and friends
School and study
Youth
Working life
Mass media
Social institutions
Finland in relation to other countries
Leisure-time and hobbies

(4) Man's environment

Geography, countries and nations
Nature, plants and animals
Time and seasons
Weather
Materials, things and their qualities

(5) Units, quantity, order

C. Vocabulary

When words and idioms to be taught at the comprehensive school are selected attention should be paid to their communicative value. The main question is how the words and idioms to be learnt will influence the pupil's possibility to take part in social interaction. The communication value depands on how the words and idioms can be used in describing "how things are" (events, activity, things, persons, matters etc.) and in expressing feelings and opinions. In the choice of vocabulary use should be made of information on the frequency and coverage of the words (e.g. frequency studies).

When the amount of vocabulary is considered and pupils' verbal products are evaluated attention has to be paid to the fact that for successful communication the correct use of vocabulary is often more important than the correct use of grammatical forms. It is not possible to express much with a very limited vocabulary. Without a command of grammatical structures

one can express very little, but without words one can express practically nothing.

It is suggested that the basic vocabulary of the first foreign language be 1,000-1,100 words and idioms, and of the second foreign language 800-900 words and idioms. This ratio, which does not pay full attention to the great difference in the number of hours, is justified e.g. by the fact that when pupils start the study of the second foreign language they have gained experience of language study which will help them learn a new language. Furthermore due to the cognitive development that takes place with age, they can learn languages more effectively than at the lower stage.

In order to support the construction of teaching materials and the planning of teaching the working group has made a proposal for a central vocabulary on the basis of frequency studies. This vocabulary consists of words and idioms which are considered to serve essential communication needs and to be connected with central language use situations. Words have been added to the vocabulary if some central situations and topics have not been sufficiently well represented because of inherent limitations of frequency studies. The lists are guidelines but not binding. Since language changes the suggested vocabulary also have to be revised from time to time.

<u>The suggested basic vocabulary is only part of the whole vocabulary that can be dealt with at the comprehensive school</u>.

Drawing on all major studies of word frequency and supplementing them by subjective judgement the working party also prepared a tentative list of basic vocabulary. It was presented by topic (cf. B) in order to make it easier to check the representativeness of the chosen words. Below is an extract from topic B1.

1. Man

1.1. Man and his body

age	fat	left	skin
arm	finger	leg	slim
baby	foot	lip	stomach
body	girl	man	throat
boy	hair	mouth	tongue
child	hand	nose	tooth
ear	head	person	voice
eye	hear	right	woman
face	heart	sex	

1.2. Health, illness, hygiene

alive	die	ill	smoke
bath	doctor	life	soap
brush	feel	medicine	sore
catch	fine	nurse	temperature
chemist's	(the) flu	pain	toothbrush
cold	handkerchief	rest	towel
comb	headache	shower	wash
dead	hospital	sick	well/better
dentist	hurt		

1.3. Moving and activities

be	fail	lie	return
become	fall	live	run
begin	fast	look	set
borrow	find	look for	shut
break	give	lose	show
bring	get	make	sit
carry	go	mean	sleep
catch	happen	meet	slow
change	have	move	stand
choose	help	open	stay
close	hold	pass	take
come	hurry	play	try
cut	keep	put	turn
develop	leave	save	use
do	lend	quick	walk

1.4. Sensory perceptions, feelings, attitudes, thoughts

afraid	glad	matter	sound
agree	good	may	special
angry	guess	mind	strong
bad	happy	must	suitable
beautiful	hate	need	sure
become	hear	nice	surprised
believe	hope	noise	taste
can	hurry	pleasant	terrible
careful	hungry	please	think
chance	hurt	pleased	thirsty
cry	idea	pity	tired
dangerous	imagine	possible	trouble
dear	important	pretty	true
decide	impossible	problem	truth
dream	interested	quiet	typical
difficult	interesting	ready	understand
easy	kind	real	useful
enjoy	know	remember	want
feel	laugh	right	watch
feeling	learn	sad	will
fine	let	see	wish
foolish	like	simple	wonder
forget	look	smell	wonderful
free	love	smile	worried
fun	lovely	sorry	worry
funny			wrong

1.5. Verbal interaction

answer	listen	say	tell
ask	mention	speak	thank
call	message	suggest	word
explain	question	talk	write
language	read		

In order to leave pupils enough time to learn the structures and in order that they can get practice also in the understanding of language which is more difficult than what they can produce themselves, new structures can be gradually introduced before they are actually taught and practised.

The list below states for each structure whether the pupil should understand it or whether he should also be able to use it at the grade level in question. The given examples try to illustrate and show the range of use of the structure.

As regards the first foreign language the structures are presented for grades 3-4 (shown here), 5-6 and 7-9, as regards the second foreign language (Swedish grades 7-9) no subdivision has been made.

D. Structures

The criteria used in the selection of structures consists of both external and internal aspects of the language. The understanding and command of structures should enable the pupil to discuss the suggested topics and to cope with suggested language use situations. In addition to this external criterion the aim has been to establish systematicity in the teaching of language structure and to grade the structures from simple to more complex ones. Below is an extract from the structure list covering the first two years (grades 3-4).

English (first foreign language)

Grades 3-4

Grammatical "category"	Grammatical "unit"	Notes/examples
	The aim is that on the basis of the instruction given the pupil is able to	
NOUNS	- use the indefinite and definite article in the idioms he has been taught	
	- use without article the mass nouns	also idioms e.g. at home, at school
	- express quantity using the singular and plural of a noun (-s and -es)	irregular plurals as vocabulary items
	- express ownership using the s-genetive singular	
ADJECTIVES	- use an adjective as a predicate complement	
	- understand an adjective as an attribute	
ADVERBS	- use the most common adverbs expressing place, time and manner	E.g. away, back, down, here now, right, there, up, well
NUMERALS	- express quantity using cardinal numers 1-100	ability to spell numbers 21-100 need not be evaluate
PRONOUNS	- use the subject forms of personal pronouns and in a preliminary manner also understand the object forms	Primarily me, you, us E.g. Can you help me/us? I can't hear you. You can help Pekka/Marja. Can you remember it?
	- express ownership using attributive possessive pronouns	

Grammatical "category"	Grammatical "unit"	Notes/examples
	→ use the demonstrative pronouns <u>this</u> and <u>that</u> and understand the demonstrative pronouns <u>these</u> and <u>those</u> - use the pronouns <u>what</u>, <u>who</u> and <u>whose</u>, as well as the interrogatives <u>how</u> and <u>where</u> in the formation of interrogative sentences	
VERBS	- use the present continuous - use the simple present tense especially in short answers - use the auxiliary verbs <u>can</u> (can't), <u>must</u> with the infinitive - form commands using the basic form of the verb, and prohibitions using the form <u>don't</u>	E.g. Yes, I am/have/can/must. No, I am not/haven't/can't. (mustn't later)
CONJUNCTIONS	see syntax	
PREPOSITIONS	- use the most common prepositions expressing place (<u>in</u>, <u>on to</u>, <u>from</u>)	
SYNTAX	- form short affirmative declarative (main) clauses and negative clauses without the auxiliary verb do	E.g. <u>Subject- predicate</u> He is coming. <u>Subject-predicate-predicate complement</u> Mary is happy. Rex is a dog. <u>Subject-predicate-object</u> I can open the window. I am reading it. <u>Subject-predicate- adverbial phrase</u>. The book is there. The book is on the table.
	- form short interrogative clauses without the auxiliary verb do - form coordinate clauses using the conjunctions <u>and</u> and <u>or</u>	

3.4. Developments in the late 1970's: a course-based upper secondary school syllabus

The most recent instance of syllabus construction (in which the author took part as a member and partly as secretary of the working party) concerns the upper secondary school. What is new in that work is the fact that the syllabus is divided into smaller units called "courses". Each course lasts 38 hours. Objectives and contents are defined for each course separately. The dominant aspect in such syllabus design is the topic of each course. The courses in English are designated by the following titles: (1) Man and his immediate environment (community), (2) Man, his interests and the services he uses, (3) Man and his work, (4) Man and society, (5) Man, science, technology and mass communication, (6) Man, education and culture, (7) Man and nature, (8) Man and the peoples of the world. This general title is followed by a description of the general approach, a description of how the course is related to the overall educational objectives of the upper secondary school, a description of the four language activities (skills) and their relative emphases, a description of subtopics and language use situations, and finally a broad outline of structures. Some suggestions are given concerning teaching methods and the evaluation of learning outcomes.

Since it is difficult to get a good idea of the overall aim of language teaching by reading lengthy course descriptions, the syllabus also gives a general description of the overall aim. It is as follows: The aim of language teaching in the upper secondary school is to give pupils requisite qualifications for and awaken their interest in acquiring, maintaining and expanding their knowledge of foreign languages in school and after it. The objective is that pupils would have oral and written communication skills in general (ie. non-vocational) language use situations and for dealing with topics of general (ie. non-vocational) nature. Achieving such communication skills presupposes that the pupil is familiar with the structure and uses of the language and has knowledge about the way of life and culture in the areas where the language in question is spoken.

The pupils are expected to be able to understand more difficult language than they can produce themselves. This requirement applies, in particular, to reading comprehension, which is an essential prerequisite for furhter

studies and for the ability to keep up with developments in one's later occupation.

The topics dealt with in language teaching and the teaching-learning process itself must contribute to personality development and support the overall educational aspirations of the upper secondary school.

In addition to the formal statement of objectives the syllabus also discusses language teaching in relation to lifelong education, the role of the structural elements of language in language teaching, the role of communication skills and the significance of knowing basic features of the cultural background of the language area.

The syllabus also outlines the criteria for the selection of teaching contents: structures, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, language use situations (=functions) and topics.

Course 1 will be presented in the following in order to give a better idea of course-based description of language teaching objectives.

Course 1: Man and Community

Perspective:

During the first course the focus is on topics related to the neighbourhood/community, on typical language use situations associated with the general setting and on typical language found in the setting and situations. Special emphasis is devoted to language use situations associated with personal contacts. A characteristic feature of such contacts is that language is informal. Language use situations presuppose mainly listening comprehension and speaking, to some extent also reading and writing.

In personal contacts are reflected the customs and attitudes of different cultures, of different social strata and of different generations. It is recommended that topics and situations should be dealt with from the point of view of young people.

During the first course it is recommended that pupils' knowledge of central structures is diagnosed and, if needed, reviewed.

Pupils should also be given guidance in the study techniques and skills of the new school.

Contents

Topics: home and family, relatives, friends, human relations, generation gap, daily chores, leisure activities, pastime

Language use situations

Contacts with family, relatives, friends, acquaintances, work mates etc. involving eg.

- greetings, leavetaking (different registers)
- introducing oneself, introducing others, and appropriate responding
- talking about daily life (starting, maintaining discussion, conversational rituals)
- requesting, asking, persuading, ordering, forbidding (appropriate registers)
- reporting and narrating on everyday events and experiences
- expressing thanks, felicitation, invitation, apology etc. orally and in writing (appropriate registers)
- writing cards, notes, messages and letters

Structures: review of tenses

Objectives:

In relation to general educational objectives: the first course should aim, in particular, to develop a positive attitude towards studying.

Language learning objectives: The aim is that at the end of the course the student

- is able to master the basic reviewed structures in order to be able to cope with subsequent courses
- is able to understand spoken language related to the topics and situations included in the course
- is able to use the language orally in situations dealt with and in similar situations
- is able to understand written texts related to the topics and situations dealt with in the course
- is able to write messages related to the included topics and situations

Relative emphasis of skills:

Particular emphasis is devoted to the mastery of basic structures, to listening comprehension and speaking.

Teaching arrangements:

Most of the topics and situations are familiar to students since similar matters have been dealt with in the comprehensive school. It is recommended that the approach now is such that problems related to the topics and language use situations are given more emphasis so as to stimulate discussion in class. Oral and written "texts" should also have a "literary" component.

Working methods should be adapted to the emphasis of the course: structure review and intensive development of listening comprehension and speaking. These two skills can best be developed using pupil-centred methods (work in pairs, small group activities, etc.).

Evaluation:

After entry diagnosis student progress can be followed with formative "tests". At the end of the course there will be a test consisting of a test of central structures and of a listening comprehension test plus appropriate responding to what was heard.

3.5. Syllabus construction work in progress: revision of the common core syllabus

A working party consisting largely of the same persons involved in the preparation of the draft common core syllabus for the comprehensive school was set up in May 1980. Its task is to revise the common core syllabus and prepare a didactic manual to help teachers in its use. The deadline for the proposal concerning the first four years (grades 3-6) is the end of 1980 and that for the last three years (grades 7-9) and the didactic manual is the end of 1981.

The work of the group will consist mainly of minor revisions and minor additions. It is intended to present the objectives and contents in a new way following the idea of "facet analysis" developed by Guttman (1970). Facets are dimensions of a domain or situation which are considered to be relevant for analyzing and measuring it. Facet analysis is, therefore, a kind of a priori factor analysis. Facets are often linked

semantically in a "mapping sentence" (Millman 1974). This has been done in the following figure, which represents a preliminary goal definition for FL teaching in the comprehensive school. The aim is that on the basis of the instruction the pupil is able

To understand, respond and produce English for the following functions:	in relation to the following notions and topics			requiring the following skills of	in the following situations
1. Interacting with other people (cf.A2) -greeting/taking leave -introducing/being introduced -thanking =	(cf. B1,B2,B3,B4) being	name age nationality	health friends home life	listening comprehension	face-to-face contacts with friends, other young people, known adults, unknown adults, officials (also telephone, loudspeakers, radio, TV)
2. Exchanging information (cf. A1,A2,A3,A4) -asking -telling -instructing =	place time	movement clock, date, duration, frequency	school working life social institutions	speaking	
3. Expressing attitudes, feelings and opinions (cf.A2) -congratulating -expressing regret and sympathy -expressing agreement/disagreement =	quantity quality	number, order colour, size, other characteristics	leisure, hobbies nature weather traffic travel mass media Finnish customs meals	reading comprehension writing	personal messages and letters signs and forms prose text personal messages and letters

The new system is basically only a new way of stating the objectives and contents already found in the 1976 draft. This more systematic approach will, however, make it possible to check the representativeness and consistency of objectives and contents.

4. NEED OF MODELS

There are several reasons why we need models in education and in language teaching. Education and language teaching as systems and processes are so complex that we need models

(1) to help us understand and explain how they function
(2) to guide and inform our thinking, planning and actions without determining them in detail
(3) to help us evaluate their performance and make required changes
(4) to help us foresee future problems and developments.

In Finland we have in recent years been particularly interested in macrolevel models. This has been a natural consequence of extensive reforms of all educational levels from preschool to higher education. The need for national planning was recognized when the Ministry of Education in late 1976 set up a committee to draft a plan for a national language teaching policy (submitted to the Ministry in February 1979). The author served as one of the secretaries of the Committee. While models are obviously mainly needed in planning and administration as well as in research, teachers also should be familiar with them if they do not wish to relinquish a legitimate interest in how the language teaching system operates and how it should be improved.

It seems to me that a major development in education in general, and in language teaching as a specific instance, is a growing realization of them as social institutions, as social systems, serving some fundamental social desires, needs and functions. Language teaching serves basic communication needs and as its importance tends, if anything, to increase it is more and more acquiring the characteristics of any institutionalized process. This means, among other things, that language teaching is becoming more and more organized, which means that roles and role relationships are specified in detail; more systematized, which means that tasks are specified; and more stabilized, which means that language teaching is not dependent on particular individuals. Language teaching is not only the activity of individual teachers. It is a system of many activities. In order to understand it as a system we must realize its boundaries, its central purposes and its level in a larger context. We must be aware of its various subsystems and their interrelationships. For all this we need

models to describe and work out the practical consequences of different approaches. In the author's opinion, it is in this area - the exploration and exemplification of the systems approach to language teaching - that the Council of Europe project, directed by Mr John Trim, on developing a European scheme for foreign language teaching by adults and its subsequent adaptation to school learning has done pioneering work of a high intellectual and practical value.

4.1. Model of the language teaching system

In order to be able to describe, understand and, in particular, to plan the national language teaching system we need a model to guide us in our work. One possible model is presented in Figure 2 (Takala 1979). It is an adaptation of similar models proposed by Stern (1970) and Strevens (1977). Formal language teaching in a school-type context takes place in a complex setting consisting of a number of levels. At level 1, the societal level, the need of languages is manifested in a more or less clearly defined language teaching policy and is recognized in the form of societal support for language teaching. At level 2, the school system level, we are concerned with the foundations of language teaching, its infrastructure: the organizational and administrative framework and the traditions of language teaching. At level 3 we are concerned with the definition of the general approach or strategy of language teaching. This is usually expressed in a curriculum (syllabus). Syllabus construction is a demanding task in which a number of disciplines can and should be drawn upon. The written curriculum (= the intended curriculum) is implemented (=the implemented curriculum) to a smaller or greater extent at the level of teaching (Level 4), which takes place in a complex setting, where many tactical decisions must be made by the teacher every day. The curriculum is, however, realized by the pupils at the level of learning (= the realized curriculum). Evaluation data are mainly collected from the teaching and learning levels to get feedback to all other levels as well.

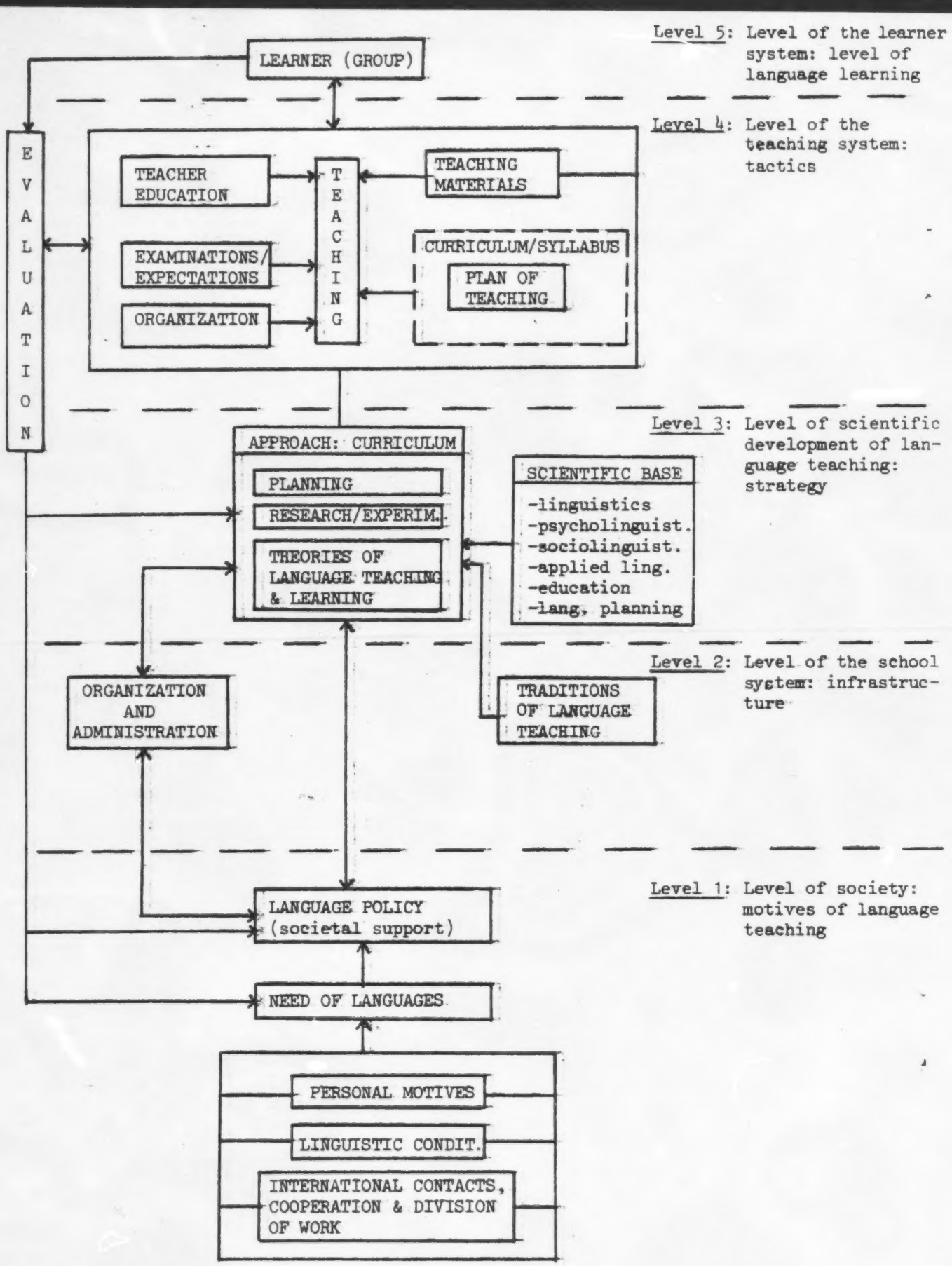


FIGURE 2. General model of the language teaching system (Takala 1979)

4.2. Model of continuity in language teaching

While there are problems in describing progression in language learning and in describing levels of language proficiency (cf. Wilkins 1978, Trim 1978), it is important that we have some conception of how continuity can be guaranteed when pupils move from grade to grade and from one type or level of school to another. Table 1 shows how the national committee on language teaching policy in Finland attempted to outline, in very broad and general terms, the orientation and staging of the objectives of language teaching.

TABLE 1. General orientation and staging of the objectives of language teaching on different levels of the educational system in Finland

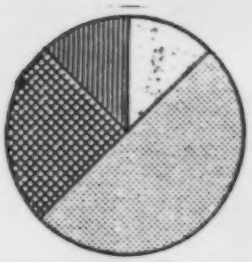
Syllabus/ course starting on/in	Comprehensive school	Secondary level education			Colleges and universities	On-the job training	Adult education	Leisure time activities
		Upper secondary	Vocational sector					
			Craft-level	Technician level				
Grade 3/ aged 9 (compulsory)	GP/threshold competence	GP/basic competence	SP/threshold competence	SP/basic competence	SP/general competence	SP/tailored competence	GP/SP threshold competence	Individual aims
Grade 7 aged 13 (compulsory)	GP/threshold competence	GP/basic competence	SP/threshold competence	SP/basic competence	SP/general competence	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto
Grade 8 aged 14 (optional)	GP/waystage	GP/competence approaching threshold	SP/competence between waystage and threshold	SP/ threshold or limited basic competence	SP/basic or limited general competence	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto
Secondary level	-	GP/limited basic competence	SP/formulaic competence	SP-limited threshold competence	SP/basic competence	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto
Tertiary level	-	-	-	-	SP/threshold competence	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto

GP = general purpose, for general purposes
SP = special purpose, for special purposes

Even such a very general outline of progression is useful, since practical experience shows that there is often an information gap between different types and levels of educational institutions. For this reason, it is not unusual that the comprehensive school is sometimes expected to do part of the job that properly is the bailiwick of the upper secondary school or even the vocational school etc. The chart also demonstrates quite clearly that a wide variety of language teaching provision is needed to satisfy the wide variety of demands on language skills.

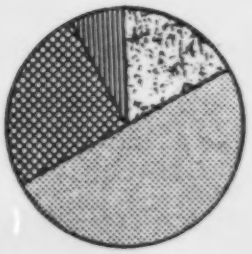
4.3. Model of qualitative and quantitative targets for language teaching

The national committee on language teaching policy also attempted to outline what proportion of the adult population should know what particular languages and how well. This is illustrated in Figure 3.



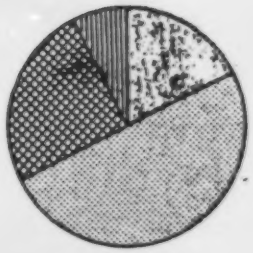
Swedish about 100 %[1)]

10-15 % very good
50 % good
25 % satisfactory
10-15 % passable



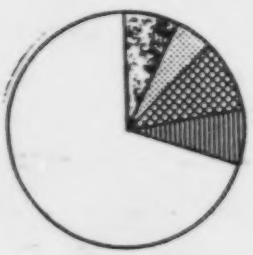
Finnish about 100 %[2)]

15-25 % very good
50 % good
25 % satisfactory
5-10 % passable



English about 100 %

15-20 % very good
50 % good
25 % satisfactory
5-10 % passable

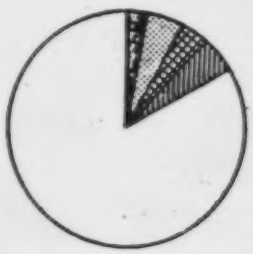


German about 30 %

5-10 % very good
5 % good
10 % satisfactory
5-10 % passable

Russian about 30 %

5 % very good
5 % good
10 % satisfactory
10 % passable



French about 15-20 %

2-3 % very good
5 % good
3-5 % satisfactory
5 % passable

1) The target percentages for Swedish concern the Finnish speaking population.

2) The target percentages for Finnish refer to the Swedish speaking population.

= very good knowledge
= good knowledge
= satisfactory knowledge
= passable knowledge
= no knowledge

FIGURE 3. Qualitative and quantitative targets for language learning in Finland

The proposal means that every adult Finn would, in the future, have a varying degree of knowledge of c. 2,5 foreign languages on the average. This mean, however, will be reached so that some people know several languages and some only two. There will, in other words, be qualitative and quantitative variability in terms of the knowledge of foreign languages.

4.4. Model of general policy for the development of language teaching

Since the national committee on language teaching policy saw as its task to provide a general framework for more detailed planning (eg. syllabus construction), it made an attempt to outline the general aim of language teaching, relate it to commonly accepted objectives of social and educational policy in Finland. In such a way it was possible to see what demands are set on language teaching.

Objectives and demands can be implemented in several different ways. The committee also attempted to define what means would help meet the defined objectives and demands. The relationships are indicated by dotted lines in Figure 4. Finally the committee described how different institutions can and should contribute to fulfilling the overall aim of language teaching, ie. satisfying the needs in modern languages in Finland. The figure is constructed so that the upper part presents the general aim of the language teaching system and the demands set on it. The lower part shows ways and means to obtain the objective and fulfil the demands and the institutions responsible and contributing to that. Since the figure is strongly reduced and may, therefore, not be easily legible, the "boxes" are numbered and their contents are printed in Appendix 1.

FIGURE 4 OMITTED BECAUSE OF POOR REPRODUCIBILITY

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

It seems to the author that one of the most important developments in education has been a growing realization of the interdependence of all parties concerned and a better understanding of their proper roles. The roles may differ to some extent eg. in accordance with the degree of centralization of the educational system. The role of the teacher may vary quite a lot but it is recognized more and more clearly that, irrespective of the system of education, what matters in the final instance is what happens in the classroom, what the teachers and pupils do. This means that it is neither desirable nor feasible to aim at "teacherproof" systems (eg. curricula), since teachers will act in accordance with their more or less conscious mental habits and principles anyway. An interesting question, which is increasingly attracting the attention of educational researchers and administrators, is understandably what guides teachers' activities. A related question is: what is and should be the role of the curriculum. A more detailed and subject-specific question is: what should be the general orientation or approach of the curriculum of modern language teaching. In the foregoing the author has described how we in Finland have attempted to look for answers to such questions.

In any human activity the ultimate motivation, as the British philosopher Alfred North Whitehead has pointed out, is the sense of value, the sense of importance. Without at least occasional authentic feelings of doing something useful and important, human activity sinks to a meaningless, boring, grim and tiring routine. For language teaching to become and remain a rewarding experience for students and teachers alike it is imperative that it is felt to be necessary, justified and productive. For language teaching to get required social and financial support it is also important that there is a commonly shared feeling in a given society that language teaching is necessary and effective. In the continuous and, it seems, growing pressures for class time coming from a variety of groups and sources, language teaching can compete successfully only if it has factual and convincing arguments to bring forth, which show its necessity, justification and effectiveness. This is one of several reasons why the language teaching profession should actively encourage and support research and developmental work on language teaching and learning.

Language teachers have a legitimate professional interest - and, indeed, a moral and social obligation - to give people tools and motivation for international communication and co-operation. This gives language teachers a sense of doing a valuable service for mankind. Language teaching is a job that requires expert knowledge, the services of a true professional. This is not universally understood. Language teachers should strive to make their job recognized as a true profession. A true profession, like medicine, is always trying to improve its knowledge base and its methods. A true profession fuses the empirical and the rational methods. A true profession can also clearly demonstrate progress and improved performance.

Recognition as a profession helps in getting social esteem and support. In my opinion language teaching can become recognized as a true profession only if it takes several steps in the theoretical direction. The same requirement of theoretical advance applies equally to syllabus construction. Relevant and powerful theories are necessary conditions for knowledge and even in language teaching knowledge is power.

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Appendix 1

Overall aim of the language teaching policy

1. LANGUAGE TEACHING MUST SATISFY THE NEEDS IN MODERN LANGUAGES IN FINLAND

Demands set on the language teaching system:

2. Needed knowledge of languages must be produced effectively
3. Language teaching must be arranged in harmony with general educational policy
4. Language teaching must take into account individual capabilities and motivations
5. Language teaching must take into account the requirements of manpower and the development of economy
6. Language teaching must take into account the requirements of social development
7. Language teaching must take into account the requirements of cultural development
8. Language teaching must take into account the requirements of international contacts and co-operation
9. Language teaching provision must offer sufficient variety
10. Language teaching must be sufficient in terms of quantity
11. Language teaching must provide a well-articulated progression
12. Knowledge of languages must be produced economically
13. Language teaching must be developed systematically and with improved co-ordination
14. Contribute to increasing educational equality
15. Contribute to upgrading general level of education
16. Contribute to the overall development of personality
17. Contribute to the promotion of general mental well-being
18. Contribute to the promotion of satisfaction and self-realization
19. Contribute to stable economy and balanced economic growth
20. Contribute to the promotion of general material well-being
21. Contribute to increasing possibilities of democratic participation
22. Contribute to increasing a more just and balanced distribution of benefits

23. Contribute to the development of national culture

24. Contribute to the promotion of pluralistic culture

25. Contribute to a just supply and distribution of cultural services

26. Contribute to increased international understanding and peace

Ways and means to obtain the aim and fulfil the demands:

27. Administrative rules and regulations are given to guarantee adequate provision

28. Support is given to activities and arrangements which produce more balanced choice of languages

29. Information about the opportunities to choose and study languages

30. Financial support is given to the production of suitable teaching materials

31. Language teaching services and language learning opportunities are arranged to meet need and demand

32. Syllabuses are articulated both downwards and upwards

33. Pre-service and in-service education of teachers is developed

34. Teaching is geared to the entry level of students and proceeds at a level and pace suitable to the teaching group

35. Language teaching is arranged so that the material,mental, time etc. resources are utilized optimally

36. Decisions concerning language teaching are taken with due consideration to research, experimentation and developmental work

37. Language teaching is developed systematically by trying out alternative models

38. Interaction and co-operation between parties involved in language teaching is intensified

39. Equal opportunities to use language teaching services are promoted irrespective of personal wealth, social background, geographical location and mother tongue

Institutions contributing to realizing the national language teaching policy:

40.

EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION			
Ministry of Education			
National Board of General Education	National Board of Vocational Education	Provincial Department of Education	Municipalities

41.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS				
Comprehensive school	Upper secondary	Vocational sector	Institutions of Higher Education	Adult education
General-purpose threshold competence	General-purpose basic competence	Special-purpose basic competence	Special-purpose general competence	General- or special purpose knowledge of languages

42. On-the-job training

43. Language Centre of Finnish Universities

44. Centre for Research on Language Teaching (new institution proposed by the Committee)